

DAILY BULLETIN

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BUSH "HEARTENED" BY STRONG TURNOUT FOR PALESTINIAN ELECTION

White House calls January 9 "a historic day" for Middle East..... 1

BUSH, POWELL PRAISE SUDAN PEACE ACCORD, URGE SWIFT IMPLEMENTATION

President calls agreement "model" for ending atrocities in Darfur 2

NO ALTERNATIVE TO ELECTIONS IN IRAQ, POWELL SAYS

Secretary also discusses Palestinian elections, Sudan, tsunami relief..... 4

IRAQI CANDIDATES LAUNCH POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

Voters look for answers on jobs, health care, crime.. 5

BUSH "HEARTENED" BY STRONG TURNOUT FOR PALESTINIAN ELECTION

White House calls January 9 "a historic day" for Middle East

President Bush says he is "heartened" by the strong turnout for the Palestinian elections January 9, calling it "a historic day for the Palestinian people and for the people of the Middle East."

The United States "stands ready to help the Palestinian people realize their aspirations," but the new Palestinian government faces critical tasks ahead, including fighting terrorism, combating corruption, building reformed and democratic institutions, and reviving the Palestinian economy, Bush said in a statement issued by the White House the same day.

Bush called on Israel to "help to improve the humanitarian and economic situation in the West Bank and Gaza." He also called on neighboring Arab states to "take concrete steps with all parties to create a regional environment conducive to peace, lend financial support to the Palestinian people, and refuse to assist or harbor terrorists."

Following is the text of Bush's statement:

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
January 9, 2005

I am heartened by today's strong turnout in the Palestinian elections. Palestinians throughout the West Bank

and Gaza took a key step toward building a democratic future by choosing a new president in elections that observers describe as largely free and fair. This is a historic day for the Palestinian people and for the people of the Middle East.

America and all free nations strongly support the efforts of the Palestinian people to create lasting democratic institutions. These efforts -- including today's presidential elections and the parliamentary elections that will follow in several months -- are essential for the establishment of a sovereign, independent, viable, democratic, and peaceful Palestinian state that can live alongside a safe and secure Israel. These elections are further proof that when given a choice, all peoples seek to live in liberty and to choose their own government.

The United States stands ready to help the Palestinian people realize their aspirations. The new Palestinian president and his cabinet face critical tasks ahead, including fighting terrorism, combating corruption, building reformed and democratic institutions, and reviving the Palestinian economy. We look forward to working with him and the Palestinian people to address these challenges and to advance the cause of Middle East peace consistent with the vision I set forth on June 24, 2002, of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. Other countries also have constructive and vital roles to play. Israel must help to improve the humanitarian and economic situation in the West Bank and Gaza, and follow through with the Disengagement Plan. The Arab states must take concrete steps with all parties to create a regional environment conducive to peace, lend financial support to the Palestinian people, and refuse to assist or harbor terrorists. The United States is looking carefully at how we can best organize and fund our own efforts to help the parties achieve a lasting peace.

BUSH, POWELL PRAISE SUDAN PEACE ACCORD, URGE SWIFT IMPLEMENTATION

President calls agreement "model" for ending atrocities in Darfur

President Bush has congratulated the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement for signing a peace agreement January 9 that moves closer to ending a decades-long civil war in that country.

In a statement released by the White House the same day, Bush said that now the "difficult work of implementation" must begin. "Only the implementation of this agreement in good faith can result in long-term peace and development," he said.

Bush called for the new agreement to "serve as an inspiration and model" for both sides in their work toward negotiating a peaceful resolution of a more recent conflict in the Darfur region of the country. There, Bush called upon all sides "to live up to their ceasefire commitments, to end atrocities, and to allow the free movement of humanitarian workers and supplies."

In his remarks during the signing ceremony for the peace accord at Nairobi, Kenya, Secretary of State Colin Powell called it "a promising day for the people of Sudan, but only if today's promises are kept." Powell urged all sides "to seize this historic opportunity to transform Sudan from a country torn by war into a nation united in peace, from a place of tragedy into a land of hope."

Powell called on the world to "stay closely engaged with Sudan in the hard work of reconstruction." He added that the "new 'partners for peace' must work together immediately to end the violence and atrocities in Darfur -- not next month or in the interim period, but right away, starting today...we expect to see rapid negotiation of the crisis in Darfur."

Following are the texts of Bush's and Powell's statements:

THE WHITE HOUSE

January 9, 2005

Statement by the President

I congratulate the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement. I thank all the officials of the United States Government who have worked hard

to help achieve this agreement, including Secretary of State Colin Powell, former Special Envoy for Sudan, Ambassador John Danforth, and the Special Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan, USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios. I also thank the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, which sponsored the talks, and the government of Kenya, which hosted them, and the governments of Norway and the United Kingdom, and the African Union, which played constructive roles for peace.

Both sides should be proud of this accomplishment. The difficult work of implementation must now begin. Only the implementation of this agreement in good faith can result in long-term peace and development.

As we celebrate this positive movement toward peace in the longstanding North-South conflict, we remember the conflict in Darfur and the suffering it causes. This comprehensive peace agreement should serve as an inspiration and model for both sides in their work toward negotiating a peaceful resolution of the Darfur conflict. I call on the Government of Sudan and on all Darfur rebel groups to live up to their ceasefire commitments, to end atrocities, and to allow the free movement of humanitarian workers and supplies. The United States will continue to assist the people of Darfur in reaching a just and lasting peace.

Remarks by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell at the Signing Ceremony of the Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement

Nyayo National Stadium
Nairobi, Kenya
January 9, 2005

SECRETARY POWELL: Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, friends, I am honored to be here today representing President Bush and the American people to witness the signing of the historic comprehensive peace accord.

At the outset of his administration, President Bush set as his top priority in Africa ending the tragic civil war in Sudan. Today, we declare an end to that war, and the beginning of a peace. This accord ends more than two decades of conflict. It can close a dark chapter in the history of Sudan and open the door to a promising future for all Sudanese. Sudan can now become an example of reconciliation. It can demonstrate to the world that even the most intractable conflicts can be resolved.

These were difficult negotiations and many have made enormous contributions -- in particular, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development and the Government of Kenya. All of us owe General Sumbeiywo a great debt of gratitude for his extraordinary efforts. I am pleased that the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway were able to support this African-led process.

In September 2001, President Bush appointed Ambassador John Danforth as Special Envoy for Sudan. The president's instructions were to spare no effort. The president stayed personally involved to ensure our efforts in Sudan had the administration's highest level attention. I want to express my appreciation for the vital contributions of Ambassador Danforth, and for those of our Special Humanitarian Coordinator Andrew Natsios and my entire Africa team.

Above all, I salute President Bashir, Vice President Taha, and Chairman Garang for their persistence, dedication and statesmanship. They now share an enormous responsibility. The people of Sudan expect a lasting peace - a peace that brings democracy and prosperity to a unified country. The United States pledges our full support as you go about this historic task. And there is much to do.

The world must stay closely engaged with Sudan in the hard work of reconstruction. The National Congress Party and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement must act quickly to build on the goodwill and momentum of this bright day. These new "partners for peace" must work together immediately to end the violence and atrocities in Darfur -- not next month or in the interim period, but right away, starting today. The United States and the world community expect the new partners to use all necessary means to stop the violence. And we expect to see rapid negotiation of the crisis in Darfur.

I also want to recognize the impressive efforts of the African Union -- and in particular President Obasanjo. We urge the parties to cooperate fully with the African Union.

For our part, the United States looks forward to a positive relationship with this new Sudan. However, achieving this positive relationship will only be possible in the context of peace throughout the entire country.

This is a promising day for the people of Sudan, but only if today's promises are kept. I urge you to seize this historic opportunity to transform Sudan from a country

tor by war into a nation united in peace, from a place of tragedy into a land of hope.

NO ALTERNATIVE TO ELECTIONS IN IRAQ, POWELL SAYS

Secretary also discusses Palestinian elections, Sudan, tsunami relief

By Howard Cincotta
Washington File Special Correspondent

Washington -- The Iraqi people must be given the opportunity to choose how they will be governed through democratic elections, even though such elections will not suddenly end the insurgency there, Secretary of State Colin Powell said in a series of television news interviews January 9.

Powell spoke from Nairobi, Kenya, where he represented the United States at the signing of peace accords ending Sudan's long-lasting civil war.

There is no alternative to elections now, Powell said on ABC's "This Week." Elections will serve to undercut the insurgency by giving the Iraqi people their own elected government rather than one seen as appointed by Americans or other outsiders, he continued.

On "Fox News Sunday," Powell said: "We're going to have to defeat this insurgency in the field, with coalition troops, with Iraqi troops, and hopefully, with an elected government that the people will now turn to as their government, not just a government appointed by the coalition or appointed by the United Nations."

Powell expressed hope on ABC's "This Week" that most Sunnis would feel that they have a fair opportunity to participate in the elections on January 30 and adequate representation in the Transitional National Assembly that will write a new constitution for Iraq.

U.S. and coalition forces will need to remain in Iraq for some time, but Powell said that he anticipates that Iraqi security forces will grow significantly next year and become "increasingly capable."

"And I think they'll become increasingly capable if they know they are working for their own government, and not an appointed government, but an elected government," he said.

Commenting on the January 9 election of a new Palestinian president, Powell said that the United States will work to help reform the Palestinian Authority and end corruption as well as cooperate with Egypt, Jordan, and others to rebuild the Palestinian security forces so that they can take control of Gaza when Israel withdraws from the area in the next eight or nine months.

The United States, in cooperation with the European Union and other nations, is also prepared to contribute more financial aid to the Palestinians, according to Powell.

"The United States will push for all of the elements in the roadmap," Powell said on ABC's "This Week," including an end to violence and terror, cessation of settlement activity, and confidence-building measures such as the release of Palestinian prisoners.

"All of that is provided for in the roadmap, and with good will, and with good leadership coming into the Palestinian Authority, it is now time to get going on the roadmap," Powell said. "And President Bush has made it clear that the United States would play an active role in the execution of the roadmap."

On "Fox News Sunday," Powell termed the Sudan peace agreement between Khartoum and the southern rebel movement a historic end to 20 years of conflict that holds hope of opening a new era of peace.

"I hope that as a result of this agreement, the two sides working together can work together to solve the problem of Darfur," Powell said.

He acknowledged the attacks against people in Darfur, although he declined to characterize the current violence as genocide. However, Powell stressed the urgency of ending the attacks of both the government-backed Jinga-wei militia as well as rebel groups in the region.

On a CNN news broadcast, Powell commented on the impact of seeing firsthand the devastation caused by the tsunami that has killed more than 150,000. Powell traveled to the tsunami-ravaged countries of Thailand, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka January 2-7.

“No briefing book, no television picture really can convey what really happened here to drive through the town, to see all these fishing boats that have been tossed up on the shore,” he said. “I’ve been in war and I’ve been through a number of hurricanes, tornadoes and other relief operations but I have never seen anything like this.”

Powell said that the international response to the tsunami had been very good, adding that the United States would remain engaged in relief and recovery efforts over the long term, in cooperation with international aid organizations, the United Nations, and other countries.

“We will be making an assessment over time to see what is needed, and \$350 million isn’t enough,” Powell said on CNN’s Late Edition. “I’m sure the President will try to get more into the account.”

Powell warned, however, that such assistance has to be based on a careful assessment of what is needed, and not just the size of the financial commitment.

The U.S. will also ensure that relief funding does not come at the expense of other relief and development priorities elsewhere in the world, Powell said on CNN.

Secretary Powell’s January 9 television news interviews are available online at:

ABC’s This Week:

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/40466.htm>

FOX News Sunday:

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/40465.htm>

CNN’s Late Edition:

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/40467.htm>

IRAQI CANDIDATES LAUNCH POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

Voters look for answers on jobs, health care, crime

By David Shelby

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington - Political parties and candidates on the ballot for Iraq’s January 30 elections have begun reaching out to voters through public rallies, private gatherings and poster campaigns. The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) declared January 2 the official

starting date for the electoral campaign, and candidates will have until January 28 to communicate their views to the voters.

The January 30 election will determine the composition of a 275-seat Transitional National Assembly and fill the seats of governorate councils in each of Iraq’s 18 provinces. Voters in the Kurdish region will also be electing a Kurdistan National Assembly.

The dynamics of the campaign vary across different parts of the country. A senior State Department official in Baghdad explained that campaigning in Shi’a areas generally takes place in public rallies sponsored by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and in husseiniyyas, which are mosque-based community centers. These gatherings are forums for both candidates and local community leaders to express their views on the upcoming elections.

The official said that candidates are also seeking the support of tribal sheikhs and leading clerics.

He said that NGO’s are almost entirely responsible for sponsoring campaign activities in the Kurdish region. He noted that the Kurds have a better-established civil society and greater experience with elections given their relative autonomy from the regime in Baghdad since the early 1990s.

Both the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) have networks of civic organizations including women’s groups, student groups and professional groups, which they are mobilizing for the campaign. The KDP and the PUK have formed a joint party list, the Kurdistan Alliance, to compete for seats in the Transitional National Assembly, which will be charged with writing Iraq’s new constitution.

The official said that posters are going up across Baghdad advertising the party symbols and ballot numbers for various party lists. It is important for parties to communicate their ballot numbers since voters will be allowed to choose only one entry out of more than 100 parties and independent candidates running for seats on the assembly.

He said that candidates in Sunni areas are also speaking to voters at private gatherings in people’s homes. Working through networks of friends and associates, they find opportunities to address potential supporters in informal settings.

Unemployment, health care and crime are the issues weighing most heavily on the minds of the Iraqi voters, according to a survey commissioned by the International Republican Institute (IRI). The survey, conducted by an Iraqi polling firm, included interviews with nearly 2,000 eligible voters from across Iraq in late November and early December of 2004.

More than a quarter of respondents said they would base their votes on candidates' and parties' views regarding important issues and constitutional matters. On the economy, voters said they wanted to hear proposals for job creation and wage increases. On social issues, they are looking for greater access to basic education, an increased role for religion in state affairs, and better access to health care. On security matters, voters want to see an increase in the number and training of police officers.

Voters in the survey expressed a strong preference for national, unitary, cosmopolitan, faith-based and intellectual parties.

The poll also indicated that 84 percent of Iraqis intend to vote in the January 30 elections. The numbers are in excess of 90 percent in predominantly Shi'a and Kurdish areas. In Sunni areas, the numbers are closer to 55 percent.

The State Department official noted that senior Shi'a cleric Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani has issued a fatwa, or religious edict, telling people that it is their duty to vote. He said that this is having a tremendous impact on voter intentions in Shi'a areas. He also observed that the Kurds have more experience with elections and are therefore more comfortable with the process.

The majority of the respondents in the IRI survey who said they do not intend to vote offered no explanation for their decision. However, 12 percent cited the security situation as a factor, and only 2 percent said they had chosen to refrain from voting due to a call for a boycott of the elections.

The State Department official said the IECI and security forces are studying ways to adjust their plans in order to ensure greater security on election day, particularly in Sunni areas. He said they would likely scale back the number of polling sites, with an eye to choosing easily defensible locations, and increase the number of voting stations at each site in order to process voters more rapidly.

He added that arrangements are being made for people who were displaced from their homes in Fallujah to vote at alternative locations.